

First Sinclair, and now Pappas Telecasting Companies. The "donation" of \$325,000 of air time to one party under the fraud that it is technically legal is the partisan elevation of form over substance. This is just one more powerful media company abusing the public trust and public airways.

Pappas is not serving its constituency in California by providing one side a voice and excluding others. This is especially true when it is done at the last minute. Pappas's response that an "opposition viewpoint who wants to buy air time can do so" is cynical and disingenuous. During election season, local audiences should be offered genuine debate -- not offers to "purchase" an equal amount of response time.

Pappas uses the public airwaves free of charge and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Pappas's attempt to outflank the spirit of equal time actions is legally questionable and cast doubt on whether Pappas truly intends to serve the public interest. We need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. Further, the license renewal process needs to involve more than just a rubber stamp.